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## ON THE BANKS OF THE SEINE.

A HOLIDAY FORTNIGHT.

By Mrs M. CORBET-SEYMOUR.

I WILL suppose somebody to be contemplating a holiday, the primary condition that it shall not be too costly. The said somebody wishes a change of scene from his native land, and cannot make up his mind where to go—'abroad' being rather a vague term, full of potentialities, agreeable or otherwise. To such an one I am going to suggest a visit to the banks of the Seine, any month between May and September being suitable in the matter of temperature.

The starting-place shall be Newhaven, the landing effected at Dieppe. This is now a fashionable bathing-resort for Parisians and others, far too expensive during the summer season to be recommended to those who, from inclination or necessity, study economic pleasure-taking. A couple of hours will be sufficient for seeing the principal buildings; but if a night's rest is wished for, the Hôtel du Soleil d'Or will not be exorbitant in its charges.

So on to Rouen, the chief town in the department of the Lower Seine, and once the capital of Normandy. Here the tourist must spend two or three days, and the Hôtel de l'Europe can be recommended as reasonable and comfortable. From the upper part of the town there is a fine view over the River Seine—the river which divides it into two parts, connected by two bridges. The principal buildings are on the one bank; the prison, barracks, and cattle-market are on the other. The cathedral church of Notre Dame is a splendid specimen of Gothic architecture; it contains many fine monuments and some magnificent stained-glass windows. The churches of St Ouen and St Maclou are very beautiful; there are others too numerous to mention in a brief paper or to see in a brief visit. The Place de la Pucelle is pointed out as the spot where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431.

From Rouen the steamer runs every day

during summer to Havre—a charming trip down the Seine, which will cost six francs first-class, five francs second-class. Havre is a busy and modern town, but there are no interesting monuments to be seen. Its harbour is worth visiting by those who are interested in shipping; the boulevards and the church of Notre Dame should not be overlooked. But after a night's rest at the Hôtel de Normandie or the Hôtel de Bordeaux, the traveller will be quite ready to take the steamer across the river to the little town of Honfleur, which I propose as his headquarters.

Yes! though people and guidebooks remark that its streets are crooked and narrow, and that—exception being made of the old church of St Catharine, which is built of wood, and the church of St Léonard, which boasts some fine modern glass—there is nothing much to see, I still suggest Honfleur as a pleasant, healthy, and inexpensive place wherein to spend a holiday fortnight.

The Hôtel du Cheval Blanc, by the little pier, will accommodate you for six or seven francs per diem, everything included except wine—even the excellent cider, which is of course a speciality of Normandy. The walks in all directions are charming; to the forest of Touques for instance, with infinite possibilities in the matter of wild flowers, or along the road to St Sauveur on one side, or to picturesque Penne-der-Pis on the other. Then there is the ascent of the Côte de Grâce, which rises high above the little town; and its tiny votive chapel to visit, adorned with quaint pictures and offerings of all descriptions. Here for centuries sailors have come on pilgrimage before going to sea; here mothers and wives have knelt to pray for the safe home-coming of the breadwinner, upon whose life so much depends. The Saturday's market is the chief event of the week to the Honfleurais, and an amusing scene to the passing visitor. Grouped round the church of St Catharine are the stalls from which you purchase butter, vegetables, poultry, all excellent and all cheap.

In the vicinity of the Cours d'Orleans are the stalls for the display of stuffs and ready-made

clothing, which last the vendor will often put on in order to give a hesitating customer the opportunity of admiring shape and style. Now and again a travelling dentist appears on market-days at Honfleur. A chair for the accommodation of the victim is arranged in the cart, and when a sufferer can be tempted to undergo an operation his groans or cries are drowned by the noise of two drums, which have previously heralded the approach of the vehicle. From Honfleur to Trouville would be a charming ride for the cyclist, or a carriage drive for those who do not favour the fashionable wheel.

Caen is another favourite excursion, and is almost the most interesting town in Normandy. Here, in the church of St Stephen, lies the body of William the Conqueror. It was here too that Charlotte Corday met the Girondist leaders and planned that assassination of Marat which she believed would liberate France. The churches are numerous, and are without exception fine buildings from an architectural point of view. Like nearly every Norman town, Caen boasts many interesting old houses; but of late years it has become more important commercially. Lace-making employs the women and children.

Another day's excursion from Honfleur is to Bayeux, a dreary old town, yet worthy of a visit if only for the sake of seeing the famous tapestries which were the work of Queen Matilda and the ladies of her court. This tapestry consists of fifty-eight representations of historical subjects. In the first Edward the Confessor is shown, commanding Harold to go to Normandy and tell Duke William that he will one day be king of England. The second represents Harold on his journey; the third, Harold engaged in prayer; the fourth, Harold on the sea, &c. In these needlework-pictures the Normans wear chain-armour, and carry large shields shaped like children's kites. The last of the series shows the English flying before the conquering army at the battle of Hastings. The noble cathedral of Bayeux dates from 1106, with additions.

Another day of the sojourn at Honfleur may be pleasantly spent at Lisieux, a short journey by rail or a ride for the cyclist. It has been greatly modernised, and is now a thriving town with a considerable woollen trade. But there are still many ancient buildings and old wooden houses that date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The cathedral, commenced in 1045 and several times destroyed, has been restored in the style of the period.

There are usually a few English families living in Honfleur, but not enough to be called a colony. There is a resident English chaplain and a very friendly English consul. The shops are sufficiently numerous, and sufficiently good, to supply all the ordinary wants of the tourist. The pastry cooks (and there are several) will be sure to attract him; nor must he leave the town without tasting the little cream cheeses known as *fromages de Pont l'Évêque*.

Given fine weather (and in summer it is very fine in Normandy), a holiday on the banks of the Seine will be so pleasant that the visitor

will look back from the deck of the departing steamer with regret that he cannot stay longer at Honfleur, and an '*Au revoir*' rather than 'good-bye' to fair France.

## A TSAR'S GRATITUDE.

### CHAPTER XIX.

THOUGH Philipof had so successfully kept his temper within bounds while in the presence of Dostoiief and the children, he was nevertheless extremely angry and depressed when he stepped out into the street. This was another attack upon him by his evil destiny, one more stab from the dagger of misfortune, one more drop in his already brimming cup of injustice. Insults from Dostoiief were nothing; they could and must be borne for Olga's sake, though Philipof bitterly wished that she had not imposed so hard a task upon him; but if he was to be deprived of his principal solace in these dark days—the society of Olga's children—then, positively, life would not be worth living; he might as well be back in the fortress for any pleasure he extracted out of life outside the walls of his prison. Of course Matrona and Katia could both be trusted to ignore their master's orders to refuse him admittance, but Dostoiief could not long remain in ignorance of his visits. He would set spies and detectives to watch the house, and the servants would get into trouble. Others would be put into their places—to the grief of the children—and there would be no possibility of seeing his little nephew and niece unless he forced his way into the house. It was a bad business, and Philipof went down the road in that condition of mind in which a man longs for some one to address an offensive remark to him in order that he may relieve his feelings by knocking him down.

For an hour and more he tramped the streets, reviewing his position, reviling destiny, counting up one by one his grievances against the powers that be, fuming, despairing; now deciding that a plunge into the Neva would be the only wise course—there was the Nicholas Bridge ready to hand, and the dark current, full of back-waters and dangerous eddies, beneath—why not end the tyranny of fate once and for all? A single leap would do it. Then again, chasing the unworthy thought, would come another—that he would live on, and wrest even yet from fortune some share of her gifts. Other men had justice and happiness accorded to them in this life. Why should not he? Was he less deserving than others? Was he never to have his turn?

If Philipof had only known it, this evening was the dark hour for him which comes before the dawn. He was even now walking unconsciously into a change of fortune. Here was one street, and in the next destiny had a surprise for him. This is an old game of destiny's. We wake in the morning, imagining that this day is to be like another; then we receive a letter, or make an acquaintance, or conceive an idea, or perform an action which utterly changes, for better or worse, our life—it may be suddenly, at a blow; it may be by degrees—at any rate destiny gives us no warning. We are face to face with a crisis before we know it.

Walking, by choice, along the quieter and darker streets of the town, in order to be the less observed and disturbed in this hour of bitter reflection, Philipof was startled, on turning into a by-street near the Custom House, to find that he had unconsciously marched into the midst of what we in England should describe as a 'free fight.' There were, apparently, four men and a woman engaged in the struggle, which was being conducted in silence, though, as Sasha could see, the combatants were very much in earnest in spite of that circumstance.

Now a fight was of all things that which, in his present condition of mind, appeared to Philipof the most desirable in the world. He was dying to let off steam, and here was the opportunity to hand. The only question was, into which scale should his weight be thrown? There could be little doubt as to this, however, since one of the combatants was a woman, and Sasha only waited long enough to discover which of the struggling, grunting creatures was on her side and which opposed her, and then he joined in.

It appeared that the woman and one man, a small one, were defending themselves from the assaults of three men, and Philipof naturally allied himself with the weaker party without asking foolish questions such as 'What was it all about?' and 'Who and what were the respective sides?' and 'What the rights and wrongs of the conflict?'

Two men were busily engaged with the small but active person who fought on the side of the lady, and Philipof determined to leave these three for the present to roll about the road together, while he attended to the third man. This fellow was busy also, for though he had seized his opponent and held her tightly with one hand, he was obliged to defend himself with the other from a by no means despicable attack on the part of the lady, who, unarmed as she was, was pummelling him about the face and neck with the greatest energy.

Philipof seized his arms. 'Let go of the lady,' he said; 'quickly—do you hear? Let her go!'

The man muttered a curse, and said something to his friends, who replied, bidding him 'wait a bit.'

But Philipof gave the gentleman no opportunity to 'wait a bit.' Seizing the fellow by the back of his neck with both hands, and getting one of them well behind his collar, he 'put on the screw' to so good effect that the fellow loosed his hold of his first opponent, and sprang round to face the new assailant, taking a dagger from his waist as he did so. Philipof saw the movement of his hand, and stepped backwards; then he brought down his stick, which was his only weapon, with all his force full upon the fellow's head.

Down went the man like an ox, and 'the subsequent proceedings' interested him no more.

'Run, Doonya, run!' shouted the little man on the ground, who, in spite of the unequal fight he was maintaining, had contrived to see and make a note of the new arrival and his victory over Doonya's antagonist. 'Run, Doonya—never mind me—hide yourself—get into safety!'

But the girl remained where she was, and seemed more disposed to re-enter the arena than

to take refuge in flight. Philipof now flew to the assistance of her companion, whose voice he seemed to recognise, though there was no time at this moment to verify his impression. One of his assailants had now seized Doonya's friend by the throat, while the second was endeavouring to secure the man's struggling feet and hands with a stout cord which he had produced from his pocket. Philipof closed with the first of these, and for a moment or two rolled with him about the road. Then Sasha got uppermost and knelt upon his chest. As he did so, the light from a street lamp fell upon his face.

'Aha!' said the man, 'Mr Philipof, is it? So these are the folks he chooses for his associates. Here, Gregory, make a note of it—Mr Philipof, the suspect, you know, interfering with us in the execution of our duty, and interfering on behalf of avowed revolutionists.'

He struggled in Sasha's grasp as he spoke, and stretched his hand for his weapon, a pistol. Sasha could see it sticking out of his girdle.

'No, no, none of that!' he cried. 'Fight fair, if you like. Here, get up, and start again, but no shooting!'

But the girl Doonya, whom Sasha had relieved of her assailant, took this opportunity of making sure that there should be no pistol practice by darting up behind Sasha's new opponent and seizing his pistol before he had accepted Philipof's invitation to stand up. Seeing this, and observing that Sasha was now reinforced by the girl, the man turned and ran. Doonya coolly raised the pistol and fired after him, but missed him, though she succeeded in greatly accelerating his movements. Then the third man, who had failed to secure his nimble little antagonist, jumped to his feet and followed his friend down the road, having first, however, unobserved by the rest, drawn his knife and plunged it into the fellow's body.

A deep groan from the latter immediately called the attention of Philipof and his companion to the wounded man, and now Sasha made a discovery which surprised him—for the first glance at the sufferer showed him that they were old acquaintances: it was none other than his fellow-prisoner of the fortress, the mendacious student, to whose instinct of self-preservation was to be traced the whole series of Philipof's misfortunes since the fatal afternoon at the Summer Gardens.

But Sasha's reflections on this point were quickly put to flight by the girl Doonya, who behaved rather strangely. Having knelt a moment at the student's side in order to bind his wound, for the blood flowed apace, she sprang to her feet, and seizing Philipof's hand, covered it with kisses, bursting into tears and sobbing wildly.

'God in heaven bless you and help you as you have helped and saved me this day,' she said. 'Oh, if you had not come, I dare not think what would have happened to us—poor Colya here, and me!' She hid her face in her hands, as though shutting out some dreadful picture. 'Do you know who they were?' she whispered, a moment after: 'bloodhounds—the spies of the Third Section. If I had fallen into their hands I should have been lost. God reward you again for it!'

'But what about poor Colya?' asked Philipof. 'Neither he nor you can remain here. Those fellows will return for their friend, who is only

stunned. You must be off at once. Is there any house you know to which we could take your friend? I fear he is badly wounded.'

'Can you carry him a short way? I could help a little,' said Doonya. 'There is a house close by, belonging to friends of ours. We were on the way there when those men pounced out at us.'

For answer, Philipof, with a laugh, raised the unconscious student in his strong arms. 'Lead the way quickly,' he said. 'I could carry him to Moscow!'

Away flitted Doonya, and after her ran Sasha with his burden. Down the street and round two corners, and into a dark lane that led to the river. Half-way up the lane she stopped at a door and knocked—three soft knocks. Instantly an old woman opened the door to the extent of three inches, and looked out. Seeing that Doonya was accompanied by Sasha she paused.

'*Dobruï droog!*' (a good friend) whispered the girl.

'*Prohodyye, dobruï droog!*' repeated the old lady, opening the door wider, and allowing them to pass.

Doonya led the way to a barely-furnished room upstairs, and here Philipof deposited his burden upon a couch. The student's eyes were now open, and he groaned deeply as Sasha laid him down, though this was performed gently enough.

'Ah,' he said faintly, 'so it is you, Philipof—good for evil, my friend—upon my word, I grow ashamed that I employed so good a fellow to save me from the gallows and share my crust at the fortress! And you are in at the death after all! Upon my word, it is an odd world.'

'Come, come,' said Philipof, who could think of nothing wiser to say: 'you are not so bad as all that.'

'I am though, my friend!' said the other. 'I am booked through—I feel it. Is Doonya safe?'

'Thanks to this brave stranger, yes!' said the girl. 'Thank him, Colya—as I do.'

'This is an old friend, Doonya,' said the wounded man; 'I did him a bad turn and he has done me a good one; he is the officer who stood by me on a certain occasion at the Summer Gardens—you remember—I accused him of—a certain act, and he accused me back—we went to jail together, the judges being undecided. Upon my word, Philipof, if I had known you as well then as I do now I should have chosen the fellow on the other side.'

Doonya looked with undisguised admiration in Philipof's face: 'You are very noble,' she said, with true Russian simplicity, 'and Colya's behaviour was mean and abominable—I have often told him so: it would have been nobler to take the consequences of his deed—and the glory of it.'

'Never mind either the consequences or the glory of it now, Doonya,' said poor Colya; 'in an hour or two I shall be beyond all that.—Philipof—I treated you badly once, but I swear to you I regret it—will you grant a favour to a dying man?'

'With pleasure,' said Sasha, who listened to all this as though it were happening in a dream.

'Take Doonya away somewhere and hide her for a while; the police will be here in an hour; take good care of her; she is worth it.—Doonya, send Kirilof here. I may as well die like a gentle-

man, with a doctor to hold my hand. Tell him to bring a notary with him.—I have something to dictate for your benefit, Philipof!'

'It is too late to benefit me,' said the last named with bitterness; 'but I promise to do what I can for your sister.'

The wounded man flushed through his deadly pallor:

'She is not my sister,' he said; 'she is nothing to me—and yet everything—but all that is over!'

Doonya came to the bedside and kissed the dying man's forehead without a word.

'Thanks!' said he; 'that will help me to die happily. Now go, Doonya—good-bye! if there is a God in Heaven I hope He will bless you.—Farewell, Philipof; hide her well and quickly. Send Kirilof and the notary—that condemned knife has scooped the life out of me! Ah, Philipof, if only you hadn't jogged my arm that day we should both have been saved a lot of trouble!'

### THE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

THE Press Association is a very interesting and important organisation, of which very little is known outside the newspaper world, though most persons are more or less indebted to it. It is the leading news-collecting agency in the kingdom, a co-operative association of newspaper proprietors all over the country, formed at the time the telegraphs were taken over by the government about thirty years ago.

Up till that time there had been nothing of the kind. Newspapers were not in any way associated, but each relied on its own resources for getting news, often a difficult and costly business. Only a few—just the wealthier and the more powerful of the daily morning papers, chiefly, if not entirely, in London—could afford to organise the means of collecting news on anything like an adequate scale. The smaller London journals, and practically all the provincial press, were dependent on the great London dailies for their news of what was going on in the world.

Of course this total individualism of the provincial press kept country papers down at rather a poor level. They were bound to be very 'local' indeed, simply because their comparatively small circulation did not permit of the costly enterprise of the great metropolitan journal. It was long felt that some organised development was required in the interest of country papers, while even the big London journals might very well be benefited by a well-managed news agency. It was obvious that great waste was involved in the entirely independent action of a number of papers, each doing on its own account what, by a little system, might often be done by one representative of them all. One efficient report of a speech, for instance, would obviously serve for any number of papers, and in a great many cases, at least, one good descriptive account of any occurrence of interest would be as good as fifty. Yet every editor of a newspaper wishing to have a report of a speech delivered in a distant part of the country, or a descriptive account of the effect of a landslide or of a sensational shipwreck on a distant part of the coast, would have to incur the cost of sending a special representative on



an expensive journey, and, perhaps, the still more serious expense of telegraphing several newspaper columns of matter.

The great disadvantage at which country newspapers were conducted, and the wasteful extravagance of the chief London papers, from the absence of any united action in the newspaper world was long recognised, and in a small and tentative way the old telegraph companies—the Electric and International and the British and Irish Magnetic, had made some little effort to organise a system of news-supply when the great and important transfer of the telegraphs to state control put an end to enterprise in that direction, while, at the same time, it opened up wider facilities for more complete and efficient combination among the newspapers themselves. Meetings of provincial proprietors were, therefore, held in Manchester and London; and, as the result, the Press Association, Limited, was formed, with a nominal capital of £10,000 in shares of £10 each.

The 'P. A.,' as all newspaper men know it, is, it will thus be seen, a co-operative organisation of newspaper proprietors, who are divided into five classes—proprietors of daily morning papers, daily evening papers, tri-weekly, bi-weekly, and weekly. The individual journals of each class all contribute the same share of capital and get precisely the same service of news.

Thus a morning paper takes twelve £10 shares, an evening or tri-weekly six, a bi-weekly four, and a weekly two. A paper published only once a week, or on Wednesdays and Saturdays, obviously does not require the same service as one of the great London morning papers. It does not, of course, compete with a daily paper; its competition is chiefly with papers of its own class, and with them alone it requires to be put on a level. Each paper is charged for what it receives according to a certain scale; and if at the end of the year there is a profit on the year's business it only shows that the rate has been a little higher than it need have been, and it goes back into the pockets of the shareholders, or perchance into the reserve fund, which is now, after about thirty years of work and a business of some two millions of money, about £15,000.

The Press Association, it will be seen, is a little oasis of neutral ground, flourishing and fruitful amid the contending forces of journalism. The clash of opinions and the turmoil of argument never disturb its atmospheric serenity. In the press world it is a centre of unruffled calm, around which meteorologists tell us all storms revolve. It deals only with facts and matters of description, uncoloured reports of speeches, and such other things as may be published in any newspaper whatever opinions it may advocate or whatever party it may represent.

The association has a board of ten directors, all of them prominent newspaper proprietors, and five of whom form a committee of management, with Mr E. Robbins as the manager in charge. For many years the association, having its *clientèle* secured, and having therefore no occasion for show, was content to occupy decidedly shabby quarters in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street. Of late, however, its £10 shares have stood at a premium of £7, 10s., and with its £20,000 assets and a very flourishing and substantial business, the 'P. A.' has betaken itself to

more dignified accommodation not far from the foot of Ludgate Hill—14 New Bridge Street—which may be considered the centre of newspaper organisation, the Delphic oracle of the provincial and metropolitan press, with Mr Robbins playing the part of Apollo, in a handsomely-furnished room with stained-glass windows. This establishment is, of course, in telegraphic communication with the post-office, and in a room set apart for the purpose are a number of the finest modern telegraphic instruments for receiving and transmitting messages.

The staff for the supply of information comprises some of the ablest journalists in London. One section of it is in attendance at all the law-courts; others of its members are in the reporters' gallery and in the lobby of the House of Commons, and others constitute a sort of flying brigade, ready to take wing to any part of the kingdom in which anything of interest is going on. Each of the London police courts has some one always ready to represent the association, and in every quarter of the metropolis and in every important centre in the kingdom there are local agents on the lookout for news for headquarters; while, as in an ordinary newspaper-office, the 'flimsy' of the obscure but useful and hard-working 'liner' is regularly skimmed for items of interesting intelligence.

'P. A.' representatives do not as a rule go outside the United Kingdom; but the association trusts to Reuter's agency for foreign intelligence. It is in fact the sole agent for supplying country papers with Reuter's telegrams from abroad, while on the other hand the news collected in England by the Press Association is disseminated through the world by Reuter's company.

Primarily the object of the organisation is the supply of news and reports to provincial papers, and the shares are held only by the proprietors or managers of such papers; but any one may become a subscriber, and, as a matter of fact, not only country papers, but London, foreign, and colonial newspapers, and clubs, exchanges, and newsrooms, are regularly supplied with what they may require from the great network of which 14 New Bridge Street is the centre.

## MR POTTER'S SPEECH.

### CHAPTER II.

THE next morning Jones could hardly believe his eyes when he opened the copy of the *Westbeach Times*, which arrived by the early post, and discovered Potter's speech of the previous night reported in full. When convinced that it was really there in print, word for word, he was beside himself with joy. To an accompaniment of delighted laughter from Mrs Jones, he read it aloud from beginning to end, mimicking Potter's deep voice, dignified gestures, and statuesque pose.

The unlucky Jack, who had solemnly vowed to rise with the lark in order to interview Jones before the postman arrived, was fast asleep in bed, dreaming perchance of Katie and rose-embowered cottages.

Mr Potter, worn out by the exertions and agitation of the previous night, was also sunk in heavy slumber.

Katie, who was staying with a friend at Southpool, the neighbouring town, was serenely unconscious of all that had taken place.

Sir Joseph Maxwell, after hurriedly glancing through the copy of the paper, and finding no report of Potter's speech, had thrown it impatiently aside.

Mr and Mrs Jones had the joke all to themselves; and they thoroughly enjoyed it. Presently, however, a yearning came over Jones to go forth and spread the glad tidings.

'I'll take care that every soul in Westbeach knows about this before the day's over,' he exclaimed. 'Potter has always put on such ridiculous airs about his speechifying that every one will be glad to have a chance of poking fun at him. Why, Pearson, who was at the meeting last night, told me that he began by saying he was obliged, owing to want of time, pressure of business, and so on, to speak without notes or adequate preparation, and therefore hoped the audience would excuse any deficiencies, or some stuff of that sort. And yet the old humbug had written out every word of it, and learnt it off by heart. By Jove, it will make him look silly. Take my word for it, Mary, it will give me at least fifty votes. I consider myself as good as elected. I must be off at once, and get to work.'

'Won't you take the paper with you?'

'No. I shall want two or three copies. I'll pick up another at the office. Where's my hat? Oh! it's here. I'm off.'

'Did I tell you I was going to Southpool this morning?'

'No.'

'Yes, I am. I have to do some shopping. I shall be back at twelve o'clock.'

'Very well. Good-morning.'

'Good-morning.'

It must be confessed that Jones, though not a bad fellow in the main, was distinctly coarse-fibred. No suspicion that the task he had undertaken with so much zest might have been performed with more delicacy by some one else ever suggested itself to his mind. To use his own expression—his phraseology consisted largely of pithy if somewhat vulgar figures of speech—he meant to 'let Potter have it straight from the shoulder.'

'Have you seen the *Westbeach Times* yet?' he asked almost every one he met.

'No, I haven't.'

'Well, get a copy at once. There's going to be a run on it to-day. You won't get one if you don't hurry up.'

'Is there anything special in it?'

'Yes; a full report of Potter's speech last night.'

'But Potter never made a speech. He couldn't. The meeting was broken up.'

'That's where the joke comes in. Potter always speaks impromptu, you understand. He didn't speak last night, and yet there's a verbatim report of the speech he didn't make. See the point of it?'

'Well, if that's so, I should say that Potter's a humbug.'

'Oh, don't take my word for it. Get a copy of the paper, and look for yourself.'

As Jones saw one after another making his way towards the *Times* office after a conversation of this kind, he knew that the story would travel

from one end of Westbeach to the other before many hours were over. He strutted gaily along, humming a lively air, and smiling pleasantly to himself. He felt at peace with all mankind—with the exception of Potter—and greeted his opponents as affably as if they had pledged themselves to vote for him, as indeed he hoped they eventually would.

He was in this pleasant frame of mind when he encountered Mr Gregson, the most crusty and dogmatic old gentleman in Westbeach.

'Good-morning, Mr Gregson.'

'Morning.'

'Have you seen Potter's speech in the *Times*?'

'No, I haven't.'

'Then you'd better get a copy. There's going to be—'

'I have a copy.'

'Then you haven't examined it very carefully.'

'Yes, I have.'

'My dear sir, you can't have done. The speech is reported in full. I saw it with my own eyes. You see the joke of it is that last night Potter didn't make a speech, and yet his speech—'

'I don't care a straw about his speech. Wouldn't have wasted my time reading it if it had been in, but it isn't.'

'I tell you it is.'

'Then show it me,' retorted Gregson, taking a copy of the *Times* from his pocket, and handing it to Jones.

No words can describe the amazement of Jones when he searched every column of the paper without discovering a trace of the speech.

'This is most extraordinary,' he stammered at length. 'I—I certainly can't find it.'

'Of course you can't find it, because it isn't there.'

'But I saw it with my own eyes, I tell you.'

'Then you've either been hoaxed or you're trying to hoax me,' snarled Gregson, returning the paper to his pocket, and moving away; 'but you'll find I'm a little too wide-awake for that kind of thing, I can assure you.'

For some moments Jones stood petrified. A man never feels so helpless as when he begins to doubt the evidence of his senses. He had seen the speech, he had read it aloud to his wife, and yet, according to the evidence of his own eyes, it had no material existence; it was but a phantom of the brain, a creation of the imagination. Jones felt his flesh creep. There was something uncanny about the affair.

'Can I possibly have been dreaming,' he muttered, passing his hand with a gesture of bewilderment across his forehead. 'If I have, what an unmitigated ass I have made of myself. The laugh will be against me and no mistake—not against Potter. And yet it's incredible. I saw the thing as plainly as I see that boy there.'

The boy in question had a bundle of newspapers under his arm. As Jones glanced at him he promptly advanced.

'*Westbeach Times*, sir?'

'Eh?' exclaimed the bewildered Jones. 'No, certainly not—that is to say, yes, I will take a copy.'

'Thank you, sir.'

'Here, don't go. Stop a minute.'

He glanced hurriedly through the paper. There was no sign of the speech.

'There's sixpence,' he said to the boy. 'You can keep the change. Now, look through that paper carefully. If you can find a full report of Mr Potter's speech at the Town Hall last night I'll give you half-a-crown.'

The boy glanced up at Jones with an expression which suggested some doubt of the latter's sanity, but stimulated by the offer of so large a reward, he examined the paper with extraordinary diligence.

'Well, can you find it?' asked Jones impatiently.

'No, I can't,' replied the disappointed urchin.

Jones walked off homewards without another word.

'I must place myself under treatment for it,' he muttered as he walked along. 'I shall have a look through the paper at home, and if Potter's speech isn't in it, I shall consult a doctor at once.'

At that moment he met the Rev. Marmaduke Thompson, B.A., to whom he had gleefully imparted the joke about Potter five minutes before. The Rev. Marmaduke had a paper in his hand, and eyed Jones severely.

'This is a copy of the *Westbeach Times*,' he said sternly. 'I have examined it carefully, and I find there is not the slightest foundation for the story you have circulated about Mr Potter. If you are the victim of a silly hoax, I should advise you to expose it, for your own sake, without a moment's delay. If, on the contrary, you are the perpetrator of it, I must tell you frankly, that I cannot undertake to vote for any one who has so little regard for the truth, and I shall use any influence I may possess to oppose your election.'

'I tell you I saw the speech with my own eyes,' cried Jones desperately. 'I read it aloud to my wife. How could I have done that if it wasn't in the paper?'

The Rev. Marmaduke shrugged his shoulders and passed on. He represented at least a score of votes, and Jones groaned despairingly.

'Look here, Jones,' said a voice at his elbow. 'What have you been spreading this cock-and-bull story about Potter for? A joke's all very well in its way, but a man in your position, a candidate on the eve of election, should leave this sort of thing to the comic papers. It's undignified, you know; upon my word, it is. I've heard some pretty severe things said about you by those you sent off on a wild-goose chase to get a copy of the paper. You've got yourself into hot water, I can tell you. I shouldn't be surprised if every man you've taken in plumps for Potter.'

The speaker was Mr White, the chairman of Jones's election committee. Poor Jones began to lose his temper.

'I suppose it never enters your head that I told them what I implicitly believed to be the truth,' he exclaimed indignantly.

'Well, the facts speak for themselves,' rejoined White. 'I have worked hard for you up to the present, and I shall still give you my vote, but I tell you plainly that in future you may do your canvassing yourself. Good-morning.'

In the meantime, Jack, who seldom rose before noon on a Saturday, was lying in a state of blissful semi-unconsciousness, blinking dreamily at the window, hearing afar off the frizzling of his morn-

ing rasher, at peace with himself and all the world. No disturbing memory of his prospective father-in-law's ultimatum ruffled the calm serenity of his slumberous soul. How long he might have remained in this enviable state, if he had been left to himself, it is impossible to say. A resounding knock at the front door awakened him to the realities of life. He dragged his watch from underneath the pillow.

'Good gracious,' he groaned, 'it's eleven o'clock.'

He jumped out of bed and instinctively made for the door, which he opened and held slightly ajar. A shiver went through him as he did so, for he heard the deep bass voice of Mr Potter, who was standing on the steps outside.

'Is Mr Wilde in?'

'Yes, sir,' replied the servant; 'but he's not up yet.'

'Not up yet,' replied Potter in a tone that made Jack's flesh creep.

'No, sir; but we expect him down every minute, sir. Will you come in and wait, sir?'

'No, I won't come in and wait. Tell him that I called; tell him that Mr Potter called at eleven o'clock and was informed that he was not up yet. He'll understand what that means.'

The door closed. Mr Potter was gone. Jack understood only too well what was meant by that ominous message. He clutched his hair with both hands and groaned.

'I've done it this time. What an idiot I am. I might have known I shouldn't wake up in time on a Saturday morning. I should never have gone to bed. I'm an ass, that's what I am; an unmitigated ass. I've made Potter an enemy for life. He'll never forgive me.'

His eyes fell on his trousers hanging on the back of a chair. He dashed wildly at them.

'I'll have it out of Jones, anyway. If he's made an ass of Potter and of me, I'll make an ass of him too before I've done with him—see if I don't.'

He swallowed a hasty breakfast, and dashed off to interview Jones.

'Hallo,' shouted a friend on the other side of the street, 'have you heard the joke about Potter?'

With an ambiguous wave of the hand he hurried on.

'It's all over the place already,' he groaned, and five minutes later he was ringing furiously at Jones's bell.

'Is Mr Jones in?' he asked the servant who appeared.

'No, sir.'

'Is Mrs Jones in?'

'No, sir.'

'Well, look here, you know who I am—don't you?'

'Oh yes, sir—Mr Wilde.'

'Well, I sent Mr Jones a copy of our paper last night. I've a particular reason for wanting to look at it. You know it by sight—don't you?—the *Westbeach Times*. Just see if you can find it for me.'

'I can't, sir. Mrs Jones went to Southpool this morning, and took it to read in the train. It's very queer, but Mr Jones came in a few minutes ago, and hunted for it high and low; and when he heard that Mrs Jones had taken

it with her he took on dreadfully. I believe he's gone to the station to meet her, sir.'

'When is she expected back?'

'At twelve o'clock, sir.'

Jack darted away to the station, leaving the astonished servant gazing after him with open mouth. Presently he ran against Mr White, who quietly but firmly buttonholed him.

'Well, Jones has made a nice fool of himself this morning,' he said. 'He's been spreading a cock-and-bull story about Potter's speech being reported in full in your paper.'

'But Potter didn't make a speech,' replied Jack.

'Of course he didn't. Every one knows that. Jones wanted to insinuate that Potter learns his speeches off by heart, and had given you the manuscript beforehand as you couldn't be present at the meeting—do you see? I couldn't believe you'd be such a fool as to print a speech that had never been delivered. So I bought a paper. Of course the speech wasn't in it.'

'Of course not,' murmured Jack, who, not knowing exactly what had taken place, was afraid of committing himself.

'And yet the fellow had the assurance to say that he'd seen it with his own eyes, or words to that effect. He'll do himself a lot of harm by tricks of that kind. I've told him so. Good-morning.'

In a moment Jack realised the situation, and saw that if by any lucky chance he could get hold of the paper before Jones, the whole tide of battle might be turned in Potter's favour. Jones might protest till he was hoarse, but as he was a prejudiced witness, the public would never accept his testimony when they found it contradicted by the evidence of their own senses. Every one in the newspaper office had been bribed to maintain inviolable secrecy with regard to the suppression of the first edition; and Jack was confident that the secret would be well kept, provided he could only secure the one copy that contained a report of the speech. The fruits of victory would remain with the one who obtained that copy. If Jones got hold of it he would convince all Westbeach by ocular demonstration of the truth of his story. If it fell into Jack's hands Potter was sure of a triumphant acquittal.

It was now within a few minutes of twelve o'clock, and Mrs Jones, with or without the fateful paper, must be speeding rapidly towards Westbeach. Jack glanced cautiously into the station. There was Jones on the platform gesticulating almost frantically to a group of men who stood looking at him and at each other with incredulous smiles. Anxious as he was, Jack could not help chuckling at the comical way in which Jones's triumph had been turned, for the moment, at least, into defeat. He carefully avoided showing himself, however, fearing that Jones would immediately demand an explanation. His plan was to pounce on Mrs Jones and induce her on some pretext or other to part with the paper, before Jones himself appeared on the scene.

In another minute the train rushed in. It was unusually full. There was quite a block at the gates as the passengers crowded out. Mrs Jones was quite a dozen yards away, before Jones, who had managed to struggle out before Jack, could overtake her.

'Mary,' he exclaimed breathlessly, 'I want that paper—the *Westbeach Times*—you took away with you to read. Where is it?'

'What a start you gave me,' she replied. 'Is anything wrong?'

'Where's the paper?' he cried. 'I want the paper, the paper.'

'The paper. It's here. No, it isn't. I'm very sorry. I must have left it in the train. I forgot all about it.'

Jones turned from his astonished spouse, and rushed to the station, preceded by Jack, who had overheard the conversation. Westbeach was the terminus of a branch line, and the train was still standing at the platform. As the two men began to examine the carriages at the same moment, they naturally came into collision.

'What are you doing here, Wilde?' exclaimed Jones suspiciously.

'I want that copy of our paper I sent you,' retorted Jack defiantly.

'What do you want it for?'

'You've been trying to hoax the public at our expense, and I'm going to show you up. Do you think we're going to have the reputation of the *Times* ruined by you?'

'I tell you that Potter's speech is in that paper,' shouted Jones. 'I saw it with my own eyes.'

He naturally couldn't have seen it with any one else's, and he had made the remark before; but the poor man was too excited to vary his phraseology.

'You must be going off your head, Jones, if you suppose that any one will believe such nonsense, unless you can give them proof of it in black and white. Don't push your elbows into me, please.'

'Will you get out of my way?'

The struggle might have ended in blows, if a stalwart porter had not appeared on the scene.

'Now, gentlemen,' he said, 'what's the matter? If you've lost anything it ain't any use lookin' in them carriages. I've examined every one of them myself.'

'Did you find anything?'

'Nothing at all but a newspaper.'

'What paper?'

'A *Westbeach Times*.'

'I'll give you a shilling for it,' cried Jones. 'Hand it over.'

'Stop. I'll give you half-a-crown,' exclaimed Jack.

'Five shillings,' shouted Jones, at the same time snatching the paper out of the porter's hand as he drew it out of his pocket.

Before Jack could interfere, he had glanced at the page on which he had seen Potter's speech. It was not there. He turned pale, and the paper slipped from his trembling fingers.

'My brain must be softening,' he groaned. 'I could have sworn I saw the thing. I could have taken my Bible oath on it. Yet I suppose I dreamt it. Look here, Wilde, I expect you'll have to put a paragraph or two in about this affair, but let me down as easily as you can. I shall be chaffed to death as it is, so you needn't be too hard on me.'

'No, no,' replied Jack, who was shrewd enough to conceal his own bewilderment. 'Certainly not, my dear fellow; but really, you know, you must



be more careful in future about making assertions of that kind without sufficient proof.'

'I shall,' murmured poor Jones, 'I shall indeed.'

He was moving away, when the porter tapped him on the shoulder.

'What about that five bob as you promised me, sir.'

'Oh yes,' replied Jones, 'I forgot.'

He meekly paid the five shillings, and walked away so meek and crestfallen that even Jack was half inclined to pity him. Still Jack's relief was so intense that he could almost have executed a jig, but for the inquisitive eye of the porter. He picked up the paper, and made off at full speed to report progress to Potter.

'Well, this is a rum go,' he murmured joyously. 'Of course this isn't the paper I sent him—it can't be. But he thinks it is, and the other's lost; and unless somebody who has heard of the joke happens to find it, Potter will score every time.'

At the moment he attached little or no importance to the disappearance of the paper which Jones had actually received, but he grew more and more uneasy as he began to reflect that in all possibility it must have been carried away by somebody who got out at Westbeach.

'It would be Jones's turn to score if that turned out to be the case,' he muttered gloomily. 'He would get the laugh on his side with a vengeance. I'm afraid Potter will never feel easy in his mind till he knows what has become of that paper, or forgive me until I get hold of it.'

He was relieved to find that Mr Potter had just gone out, and that Miss Potter had just come in. A slim, pretty, brown-eyed girl of eighteen advanced joyously to meet him.

'Is that you, Jack? Come into the library. Papa's out, but he'll soon be back. He's awfully busy, you know—quite an important personage. I do hope he'll be elected. What a fine speech he made last night. I've just been reading the report of it in your paper.'

'In our paper,' cried Jack. 'Where is it? Where did you get it?'

'Why, whatever's the matter with you, Jack? I picked it up in the railway carriage I came from Southpool in a few minutes ago. Somebody left it on the seat, and I saw papa's name, and thought I should like to read his speech. Here it is.'

A glance told Jack that it was the identical paper he had sent to Jones. He flung his hat to the other end of the room, took the bewildered girl in his arms, and kissed her again and again. As he did so, he saw her pretty face become suddenly grave, and he glanced round. Mr Potter stood in the doorway, glaring through his gold-rimmed spectacles, boiling with wrath, and speechless with amazement.

'I was under the impression,' he said in his most majestic manner, when at length he had become articulate, 'I was under the impression that I had forbidden you, sir, ever to enter my house again. Why do I find you here? I have just heard that Jones, having told the story without showing the paper as a proof of it, is supposed to have made a fool of himself; but as soon as he produces the paper'—

'He never will produce it,' exclaimed Jack. 'He'll never set eyes on it again. It's here.'

Mr Potter, having a strong sense of personal dignity, did not execute a step-dance, or fling his hat about, but his jubilation was so intense that he consented to his daughter's engagement to Jack on the spot.

A week later he was elected by an overwhelming majority, his victory being to a considerable extent due to the very circumstance which at one time he imagined would insure his defeat.

The secret never leaked out. Nevertheless, he was taught a valuable lesson. He never afterwards spoke without notes, or attempted to pose as an impromptu orator.

## AN UNEXPLORED EL DORADO.

THE colony of British Guiana, or Demerara, as it is popularly called, is familiar enough to English ears. But it is mostly associated in English minds with the beautiful crystal sugar of our breakfast tables. Comparatively few people entertain any intelligent notions about the colony itself, and still fewer about its great 'hinterland'—that enormous extent of territory lying westward of the Essequibo river, the sovereignty of which the neighbouring republic of Venezuela disputes with Great Britain. Nor is this surprising, considering that fifteen years ago the district was practically unknown to the Guianese colonists themselves. In the early years of the century, under the Dutch, it had been more or less 'settled,' but the blur of time had effaced the memory thereof from the colonists of to-day as effectually as the reclaiming hand of nature had obliterated all traces of occupancy. The Central Africa into which Stanley led the van of modern exploration was hardly more unknown.

The whole region was a howling wilderness, known only to the native wood-cutters and a few daring naturalists and orchid-hunters, and the devoted missionaries who sought the Indians in their forest homes. With the exception of the speculative red line on English maps, the more distant and larger portion of it remained even beyond the pale of political sway—hence the international imbroglio that has arisen over it, but with which this account has nothing to do save incidentally. This was the condition of things in the early eighties. Then came the discovery of gold in such profusion as to lead to the inference that the rich gold-fields of Venezuela were but the outer fringe of an auriferous belt situated in this territory, which was probably the lost El Dorado of Sir Walter Raleigh's fruitless quest.

But alluring as were the prospects thus held out to the colonists, it soon became apparent that a stubborn fight with nature would have to be waged ere those treasure-houses could be rifled. And before anything could be attempted in this direction Venezuela put in her claim, the present *status quo* was established, and English enterprise, on anything like an adequate scale, had to hold its hand. That the country, however, is a veritable El Dorado is beyond dispute. I have

traversed a considerable portion of it, and can testify to the fact that it literally oozes gold in clay, in gravel, and in quartz. Even the beds of the creeks are sown with the precious metal, and would haply reveal their secret to the sunlight did not their sombre, wine-tinted waters jealously conceal the ravishing sight. But this inestimable wealth lies, for the most part, buried in a land of death. Nothing short of an army of woodsmen, engineers, and railway constructors can bring it within the reach of man. And this requires enormous capital, indomitable pluck, and assured guarantees. No one doubts that Great Britain possesses the two first essentials in abundance; but it remains to be seen whether she can afford the latter, which, after all, is the greatest of the three.

Now, let us in imagination pay a flying visit to this region. As a matter of course, there are no roads. Our route lies by water, and we travel in the crankiest and cramiest of 'dugouts'—this being the country's only conveyance. For a while the journey is ordinary enough, if deady monotonous. We paddle and paddle along over the ruddy waters of a great river, say the Mazaruni, under a blazing sun in a cloudless sky, and with nothing in sight but the thick, rank vegetation that flanks the stream to the water's edge. The first night we camp under the old adjupas (huts) of a mission station, and that is our farewell to civilisation.

At dawn we are up and away; and in an hour or two come to the cataracts, which are perhaps the fiercest and most complicated on the continent. Only the life-trained skill of the 'Boveiander' boatmen (of whom more anon) dare encounter them. The journey at this stage can no longer be called monotonous. We firmly believe that in facing these seething maelströms we are taking our lives into our hands. And perhaps we are, to some extent; but the Boveianders know very well what they are about, and if they decide to go on we are safe enough.

This novel experience over, we have time to consider the sun—and he sees to it that we do. The heat that pours down from the brazen sky through a perfectly stagnant atmosphere is akin to that of a furnace. And when we branch off into a creek and get some shade, it proves nothing to be thankful for. For these creeks sometimes wind through dense forests that the sunlight never penetrates, and they thus become pestiferous with the reek of nature's innumerable and combined exhalations. Moreover, the vegetation often interlaces right across the stream, and we have to tear our way through it, disturbing in the operation myriads of venomous insects, which assail us with great fierceness and determination.

Night falls early, and we must make camp. This is done at the most inviting, or, I should say, the least repulsive place, that suggests itself, without too much consideration as to time; for, in going farther, we are apt to fare not merely worse, but mayhap disastrously. Seldom is there room for a tent, even the tiniest, and hammocks have to be slung between the trees.

A great deal has been written about the alligators and reptiles of Guiana attacking the traveller. This, however, is mostly fanciful. They are not aggressive. The malaria is what we have

to dread. We can see, sme'l, and even feel it as it rises and hangs in a dark, filmy vapour on the motionless air. If the system is at all predisposed, it is apt to soak in—but in that case you ought not to be there. The real cause of infection is the mosquito, which abounds in the forest; and, unless you can protect yourself with netting from his attacks, you run a considerable risk. And how many can do this successfully night after night for weeks, perhaps months? Only a fractional percentage of the pioneers have met a tragic end from the reptile's lethal lance, or been devoured by the sneaking alligator; but hundreds of strong men in the bloom of health have been punctured by the mosquito's tiny sting at night, and awakened with fevered blood, never to leave their hammocks more. Truly here we have 'the pestilence that walketh by night,' and hence much of the great hinterland of Guiana is a land of death.

For the most part the face of the country is covered with these great forests, intersected in all directions by cataract-broken rivers and streams; but beyond the forest region—where the gold-fields apparently mostly lie—are immense savannahs. Some are elevated and healthful, and may one day become important cattle-raising centres. Others are low-lying and boggy in the dry season, and become marshes and lakes in the rainy season. These will probably always be worthless. Considerable mountain chains occur, but toward the southern and western borders—in so far as there may be said to exist any 'borders.' Much of the interior tableland is well adapted for agricultural purposes, being well-watered and fertile, with excellent elevations. But the rivers not being navigable, and the distance from the sea being so considerable, the railway is a *sine qua non* for development.

The fluvial system is complicated and even peculiar. Countless tributaries of the great feeders of the Orinoco and Amazon interlace and overlap in bewildering confusion, and frequently they bifurcate and flow one into another in natural canals which the Indians call 'itaboos.' One result of this is that small canoes navigate the face of the country in every direction. Indian and Brazilian traders (the latter mostly slave-dealers) frequently making the journey between the Orinoco and the Amazon.

Of the fauna and flora a great deal might be said did space permit, for the naturalist and the botanist have not exhausted the marvellous resources of this country. I have frequently encountered lizards, moths, and beetles that are not described in the standard works. And this is true to a far greater extent of the herbs. To fully understand this, one has only to compare his experience of our own medical practice with the work of the Indian peiman. The most pernicious of the local fevers are amenable to his treatment; and he can cure the ugliest of wounds, even when gangrene has taken place, as by a magical touch. More than this, he can neutralise the deadliest serpent's poison if he operates in time; and he has a system of inoculation against the effects of snake-bite the efficacy of which I have myself witnessed on two occasions. And all this is done with vegetable preparations—plus a great deal of mummery.

The whole extent of country with which I am

dealing is very thinly peopled. The pure-blooded Indians for the most part inhabit the forest and savannah regions, and live a nomadic life. They camp, cultivate, work out the clearing and move on, supplementing their ground provisions with the spoils of hunting and fishing. Their principal industries are weaving matting and feather and bead work, which they periodically take down to the English settlements or sell to traders. They are of a decidedly low type, but entirely inoffensive and generally hospitable unless they are ill-treated; in that case they vanish with the celerity of mice. Many missions have been established among them, and they are almost all nominally Christians.

There is, however, another class of inhabitants, who dwell along the central and lower reaches of the great rivers, although they penetrate to considerable distances into the interior, and have, in fact, made the whole region between the Essequibo and Orinoco their own. These are the 'Boveianders,' a half-breed race descended from the intermarriage of the old Dutch settlers with the aboriginal women. There are also black Boveianders, who are descended from the admixture of Indians with the runaway negroes who fled to the wilderness in the days of slavery. In colour, the Boveianders of Dutch extraction are of a light-brown yellow, somewhat fairer than mulattoes, and having a strong European cast of countenance. They are well-formed and generally good-looking; these of negro strain are of a dirty reddish-black, somewhat flat-featured, and ugly. In habit and manner the white is tidy, clean, pleasant, and attractive; the black slovenly, foul, sycophantic, and repulsive. Their language is English, but so full of Indian and Dutch idioms and variations as to be something of a Volapuk.

The customs of the white Boveiander, like his language, are a combination of savagery and civilisation. Socially as well as ethnologically, the European and Indian meet in his personality. Prior to the discovery of gold in the north-west territory, these people were little known in the colony except to the government and among the wood-traders, their chief industry being wood-cutting. As boatmen they are in their own way to be classed amongst the most expert in the world, combining with the unerring instinct of the Indian the superior intelligence and calm intrepidity of their Dutch ancestry. Of late years they have been brought more into touch with the colonists, and already an interesting change has been wrought in their life.

The Boveianders existed when Great Britain acquired the Colony of Guiana from the Dutch in 1814, and in their half-wild, independent way, acknowledged the British sovereignty, and have ever proved law-abiding citizens. It is a notable fact that, up to the time of the recent controversy the present generation actually remained in ignorance of the existence of a foreign country in their neighbourhood; to them, indeed, the Union Jack and Mr M'Turk, the magistrate, filled out their conception of government and authority. And it is on these people's claims that Great Britain will mostly rely to establish her rights under the fifty years' clause of the Arbitration Treaty with Venezuela. Thus may they give their name to that portion of the colony ere the last is heard of the dispute. Nor will its adoption

be inappropriate in a topographical sense, for the word is a corruption of the phrase 'above yonder'—signifying the dwellers above the cataracts, over yonder.

### THE LIGHT-KEEPER'S STORY.

EVERY one in Pengarrock knew that old Abel Williams 'had a story'; they called it 'Abel's secret,' because he had never told it to anybody, though many had tried to draw it from him when he sat in his favourite corner in the bar of the 'Sea Horse' of an evening. He was as loquacious an old man as you could meet on the coast from Weston to the Land's End; but if he imagined that an attempt was being made to draw him on to speak of his secret he would shrink back against the wall and pull silently at his pipe until closing time, when he would get up and go with the curtest of 'good-nights.'

I forget how it came about that Abel was induced to tell me his story. I used to meet him every fine day on the beach, where he sat watching the fishermen mend boats or nets, smoking stolidly; 'waiting,' he said, 'till I'm called to sign on for the last voyage.' He took me, a comparative stranger, into confidence, and I write what he told me now as well as I can in his own words.

'It was in the year '21 or '22, I can't rightly say which, for I'm going on for ninety-five now, and forget things, dates and the like. Anyway, it was about then I was in the Light Service and was ordered to the Carpenter's Rocks Lighthouse, down Land's End way. You don't know it; 'twas washed away, and never a stone left, in the winter of '52—one of the most awful storms that ever blew on this coast. Folks on shore looked and saw the light when the sun went down, and at dawn it was gone, swept clean away with the three men, whose bodies were never found to get a Christian burying. Well, in those days in the twenties only two men manned a light; they've changed that, and now it's always three—never less. If there'd been three in the Carpenter's Rocks in my day, I'd never have had this here story to tell.

'My mate was a man named Wolff—George Wolff—and his name fitted him, though maybe I oughtn't to say it, him being so long gone to his account. You've never been in a lighthouse? Well, you don't know what it is for two men to be shut up together day arter day, night arter night, and nought to hear but the wash of the sea and the scream of the wind, with now and again the cry of a gull, which isn't a cheery thing any time, and most lowering to the spirits when you hear it and nought else alive. Two men shut up together are apt to have words when the loneliness presses heavy. I'm not quarrelsome by nature; always was for peace and quiet—always; but George Wolff—well, perhaps the fault wasn't all his, though, if 'twere my last word, he'd a tongue like any scold. Anyway, things didn't go smooth in the living-room on Carpenter's Rocks; and many's the time up on the gallery, cleaning the lamp glasses outside, with a rail betwixt us and the sea-boil fifty feet below, I was minded to give him the push that would send him over. I never laid finger on him though; not but that I could have done it, me being a powerful strong man in

them days, and he—well, I could ha' held him up with one hand and trounced him sound with the other. I never touched him, though sore tempted by his tongue. I don't think he was a healthy man; he'd a yellow face, and his eyes was a queer dead-blue, with no life in them, so to speak. I did threaten him once, and that's the beginning of the story. Wolff was going for his shore spell, and as he steps down the ladder to the boat I says to him, "George Wolff," I says, "if you was more of a man, I'd ha' give you a proper lesson with my fists ere now. When you're ashore do you ask for a change, lest I come to do you an injury." He answers me back, "I ain't afraid of you, Abel Williams, big brute as you be; and I don't go to ask to be transferred to no other light. But I'll tell you what I will do: I'll report that you threaten me with violence." Them was his words: "I'll report that you threaten me with violence." I remembered 'em after on the night—on the night I'm agoing to tell you about. It was a decent man, one Anson, that relieved Wolff, and sorry I was when Wolff's spell ashore was up.

The boat that brought Wolff back and took Anson off was the last that came nigh the light-house for a matter of three weeks, the sea ran that high, you understand; it was October, and the 'noctial gales blew as if they'd never stop. The Carpenter's Rocks got their name from the reefs about; on every point of the compass you could see ragged black points in the white surf, edged tools every one, that would tear the bottom out of the stoutest boat ever put out from Plymouth. It needed nice steering to make the light safely in fair weather; with just a capful of wind we were clean cut off; and that October it blew, day in day out, till you felt the tower tremble to the smash of the sea, and shake as if it was a living thing afraid. It's ill to feel that in the living-room, with no light except a dull lamp, and oilskins and kit hanging, like drowned sailors' ghosts, in the shadows.

I forget what led to it, but one night, two weeks or thereabout arter Wolff's return, we had words—high words. Wolff always looked bad in coarse weather, and when he looked bad I did my all to keep a hand over myself. I was afraid of him; not of his doing me a hurt, you understand, he being a poor creature at best; but I was afraid, he looked so queer. When a big sea come "clap!" I'd see his lips go white and his hand shake, and he wouldn't be fit to climb the stair for an hour. He wasn't a man for a light on the mainland let alone the Carpenter's Rocks, where a boat could only come within hail in fair weather, and that's the truth. The wind that night was roaring, and whiles you'd feel the seas strike and shoot up the tower-side, and then you'd hear the crash of the falling water. We'd put things right in the lantern, and glad I was to come down and put on dry clothes. Maybe it was ten o'clock, and I was thinking to turn in, when Wolff, who'd gone a bit up the stair to see that all was fast, comes down, and he says, "Are you deaf you couldn't hear me hollerin'?" and sets to calling me ill names. You couldn't hear a fog-horn in the room itself for the wind and rain and sea, but Wolff was looking downright bad, so I put his words behind me, and I says, "What's amiss that you got hollerin'?" "There's something amiss," he says, civil enough by reason

of my easy-tempered answer; "something's not fast above." "I'll come," I says, and slipped on my oilskins, he going to climb the stair in his slow way. When Wolff was looking bad he went aloft as slow as any landsman. I went arter, and found him waiting at the trap, a little, low door that gave on the gallery you see railed round the lantern. It opened inwards, and the wind pressed so that you'd think a man outside was shoving hard and steady all his might. The two of us let it open with our four hands, and Wolff—he was gasping like a fish. I crawled out, the rain stinging on my back and the wind tearing the ears off my head; when I got to the wind'ard the force of the gale held me pressed against the lantern like a bit of paper. I drew myself, nearer lying than crawling, and come on a corner of sheet-lead the wind lifted and dropped with a thundering clap. It was nothing to harm, so I crawled as quick as might be back to the trap, where Wolff was sitting with his legs on the stair inside. "Go on down!" I yells. "But what's amiss?" he roars back. "Nothing to hurt," I yells, though his ear was but a hand's-breadth from my mouth. "Go on down, and I'll tell you." The wind and sleet was cutting into the bones of me, and it wasn't sense to sit there bawling at a man. "Go on!" I shouts impatient, and, he not going, I gave him a push to make him understand.

"It wasn't a push to call such, no more'n if I'd been putting the cat off my knee; but Wolff must have been moving, for down he slipped into the dark, and I heard him bumping down the stair as he fell. "Serve him right for an obstinate fool," I says to myself, for he'd kept me out in the wind and wet, and I'd no thought of his taking more harm than a few bruises. I got the trap shut and made it fast, and then come down. It was a corkscrew stair, two full turns of it, and very steep. When I got to the bottom where I see the light in the living-room through the crack, I trod on something. I pressed the latch, and Wolff, lying all of a heap at the stair-foot against the door, burst it open. "Stunned!" I says; for a man might well get stunned falling all that way. I pulled off his oilies, and lifted him into his bunk, dipped a clout in the bucket and put it on his head, and then I got the brandy and put a drop into his mouth. Even then I'd no thought 'at he was worse'n stunned, but by-and-by, when he didn't come round, I stooped over to listen for his breathing, and then my hands fair broke loose and tore the clothes off his chest to listen for the heart-beat, you understand. I listened till my own heart was shaking me, for Wolff's chest inside was still as a church-vault, and I knew he was a dead man.

When I knew that, I pulled the sheet over his face, and drew my chair to the other side the room, as far away's I could get, and got out my pipe, while I looked at Wolff lying in his bunk over mine. First I thought, "How'll I lie down in my own bunk to-night with his dead corpse over me?"—just that you know, same as if it had been a leak in the deck, and how was a man to sleep with water falling on his face? Then, as I smoked, things began to shape themselves, as one may say, in questions. Did Wolff fall down the stair because I pushed him? If Wolff fell because I pushed him, was his blood on my head? There was more questions, but I durstn't answer



'em. Then I thinks, "You didn't ought to sit and smoke with George Wolff lying dead there." So I puts out my pipe, and sits like a figurehead, for, with what the raging and tearing outside and the stillness in Wolff's bunk, I was muddled-like.

'It would be near dawn when I got drowsy in my chair, and got to dreaming, though it wasn't like a dream. I saw Wolff sit up, and though his eyes was a dead man's eyes, he spoke plain but slow-like, as if he thought for each word. He says, "You shoved me down the stair, Abel Williams, and killed me. The bruises shows it; and you durstn't throw me overside, because I've reported you for offering violence."

'At that I starts up, wide awake. The corpse *was* a corpse, but it had spoke, and pricked out the course to steer, as one may say. I took the lamp off the wall, and went upstairs to the lantern-room, for I couldn't bide no longer below. I slep' a little, being wore out, but by fits and starts, for Wolff, he come peeping down, a-nodding at me, and saying quite civil-like, "You killed me, and you'll swing for it; you know you durstn't throw me over, because I reported you threatened me."

'Now it hadn't been my thought to do aught but let the poor dead corpse lie respectful till the relief-boat come off to the distress-signal I'd hoist at daybreak; but when Wolff come like that in my dreams I begun to get uneasy in my mind. The questions begun again, and never stopped till daybreak, when I got up, and soused my head to clear my brains. The storm was raging as bad as ever when I went up and lay flat on my back to run up the "distress." As I shook it from the staff-top I says to myself, "You wouldn't be in such a hurry to call for help if you'd killed Wolff," and I got comfort thinking other folk would think that too. Still it was poor comfort; it's a terrible thing to be shut up like that alone with a corpse, and think all the time, "If it wasn't the fall from that push what killed him, what was it killed him?" It wasn't so bad in daylight, such daylight as came through the slits of ports, and I could face the questions straight. I says, "If the fall did kill Wolff I'm not to blame, not having any thought to do him hurt." That was my answer.

'I lit the stove and had breakfast. I sat with my back to Wolff's bunk first, but soon I had to get up and sit on t' other side of the table to face it; afore I'd finished I was casting about for what I could do, and got the jack from the locker to put over him; I wanted to treat him respectful, you understand. By-and-by I took the glass and looked to see if the coastguard had read my signal; but I couldn't see the cliffs, let alone the coastguard station, for the rain-drive, so I put by the glass and went to clean the lantern and pump oil, working very slow for the sake of working. It was getting on for dark when I went up to the gallery to look at the weather. It was blowing hard as ever, and the rain come in driving squalls straight over the tower to the shore, so's the signal might be blown to threads before the coastguard read it. The sea was mountains high and the spray broke clear over the lantern. There was never a sign of the weather breaking, and I come down.

'When dark fell I took table and chair and bedding up to the lantern-room; for the smell

of oil was better'n the close feel in the room below. I didn't sleep; the scream of the gale was awful, and it come to me quite sudden, "If this lasts, what'll I do? I durstn't throw him overside—I *durstn't* do it—or I'll swing sure as sunrise. And yet if the sea don't go down to let a boat come off, what'll I do with him?" I got thinking of this, and thinking; and by-and-by I was sure it *was* me had killed Wolff, and it wasn't believable as I'd no thought to do him hurt, having threatened him with violence. I lay awake all night; and Wolff he comes and stoops over me to tell me quite civil again I daren't throw him over, and I was bound to swing. At dawn the sky was still black; the rain was off, but 'twas blowing great guns, and a worse sea I never saw anywhere; and as I looks I says, "If it blows itself out to-day, it'll be two days more before the sea goes down to let a boat within hail, let alone come alongside." What took me I can't tell, but when I thought that I went down to the living-room. Did y'ever go in a room where a body'd lain shut up for two nights and a day? No; then you won't understand the feel of it. I put the jack straight, and then I says, "Can I do anything for ye, mate?" and him not answering (as how should he?), I says to myself, "'Tisn't friendly to keep away when maybe he'll come to and want summut." So I sits down to smoke a pipe, waiting for him to come to. I forgot the lantern, and forgot to light the stove; and if I were hungry I didn't feel it. I just sat there watching until I fell asleep; sound sleep that I wanted, not having slep' these two nights. When I woke 'twas nigh dark. I lighted the stove and boiled some tea and ate a biscuit, and then my mind being on a even keel again I remembered the lantern, what had been burning all day, me having forgot to turn it out. I went up and trimmed and lighted it again; and while I worked I says, "You're a pretty fool to set there talking to a dead corpse, you are." But all the same I was powerful afraid of the night. There was just a gleam of light in the west when the sun sank, to promise a break in the weather, and that kep' me up; for I says time and again, "The day after to-morrow I'll be took off for certain." But there was two nights between, and I sweated for fear when I thought of it.

'Having slep' that day, I was wakeful, and the horrors took me, and I couldn't see nor hear nothing but Wolff's dead face and dead voice. I've been a sober man all my life—none can say I'm not—but when Wolff come troubling me I got up and I says, "I'll get drunk." There was brandy in the locker below; I hadn't touched the bottle, let alone tasted it, for six months, excep' when I got it to give Wolff, thinking he was stunned. I got the bottle, watching Wolff's bunk while I felt round for it. I brought it up to the lantern-room and drank steady; it did not need so much, me being sober by habit. But I got drunk; 'twas the reasonable thing to do.

'It probably saved you from going out of your mind,' I said, for Abel paused and looked at me with appeal.

'That's just what the doctor says arter. He says, "The drink's cost many a man his reason; but it saved yours," he says; "it saved yours."

'And when were you taken off?' I asked. I did not want Abel to dwell longer on the story; it was too horrible.

'On the evening of the fifth day,' replied Abel. 'After five nights and five days the boat came off and took me and Wolff's body—that is, they towed it ashore lashed in blankets—they couldn't take it aboard. The doctor was awaitin' at the coastguard station; and he looks at me and orders me to bed at once. Two of the coast-guard stayed by me till the doctor come and give me sleeping-stuff. It was when I woke up the next night, having slept thirty hours right off, that they told me I wasn't anyways to blame. It was heart trouble 'at killed him, they said—heart trouble; and they didn't have no business to put him on a light at all.'

'You never went back to the Carpenter's Rocks, I suppose?'

'Not to that nor any other light,' replied Abel. 'Them five nights and days made me a old man at six-and-twenty, and I came back to the fishing. That's all the story, sir.'

### ADELSBERG AND ITS CAVE.

By CHARLES EDWARDS.

THE visitor to Venice of but ordinary energies, and with but a fair amount of time at his disposal, must reproach himself if he fails to cross the Adriatic, and take the railway from Trieste to Adelsberg. It is not often in the course of one's peregrinations about this little world that one comes well within reach of such a natural marvel as Adelsberg. The memory of it, once seen, is ineffaceable.

The best time of the year for the excursion is the summer. It is possible, however, at all times. The cave is always accessible, though it costs much more for the winter tourist to see it than for the summer traveller, who finds it then daily lit by electricity with as much method as that bestowed upon the lamps of Piccadilly after nightfall. Of course it is easy enough to traverse the Adriatic to Trieste—that place of olive oil made from cotton seed and much else of the kind. You go on board the steamer late one evening, and after a more or less comfortable night among the red velvet cushions of a spacious saloon, you are landed in Trieste at about six o'clock in the morning, just in time to see the markets in the full swing of activity.

I for my part made the trip in the spring, late in March, when the fruit-trees had got well into blossom, and the weather portents seemed fairly settled. But you never know in March and April what meteorological luck or ill-luck is in store for you. They are just as badly off in this respect at the head of the Adriatic as are we in Great Britain. In fact, though I left Venice after a day of sunshine and sweetness, when we set foot in Trieste a thorough 'bora' was blowing. If you do not know from experience what a 'bora' is, I think you may be congratulated. It was enough to look at the faces of the people who had to turn their noses in its direction. They were blue with cold, and if they were of the fair sex these had the greatest difficulty in the world to control their petticoats. The wind is a no-

torious periodical infliction. It rages from the north-east, getting well iced on the tops of the Carpathians *en route*, and picking up a whirlwind of limestone dust from the stony plateaus it sweeps across ere it gets a satisfactory outlet upon the open sea at Trieste. It is in short an abominable feature of this part of southern Austria.

The 'bora,' as much as anything else, made me hurry direct from the steamer to the railway station. I knew there would be no joy in Trieste while it lasted, and methought in the highlands of Adelsberg (some fifty miles inland) I might find it spent after a railway journey. But I was doomed to be disappointed. All along the line of the rails the 'bora' screeched and roared, and at the cave town it seemed to have made its headquarters. I could not help laughing to see how the wind caught the various passengers and railway officials at certain of the more exposed stations, such as Nabresina. It did not favour the stout at the expense of the lean. Not at all. But when its gusts were mightiest it took every man, woman, and child on the platform and swept them along irresistibly until they could get hold of something sustaining. Once or twice it looked as if there might be an accident. There were shrieks from the weaker victims. But they were evidently used to the curse in those parts of Austria, and matters duly composed themselves. The 'bora' tried what it could do in fair fight with our train. We had two engines on our side, and the rolling-stock was of the very ponderous kind. Once or twice, however, it made us stagger, and all down the valley of the Reka and up that of the Poik it had a perceptible effect upon us. It may have slackened our pace about twenty-five per cent.

The country between Trieste and Adelsberg is quite curious once the Adriatic coast is left. For bleakness and forbidding aridity it would be hard to match. We were ascending the whole way, with bare limestone hills on both sides, though not close to the line. And the uneven land between the railway and the hills was studded almost everywhere with masses of rock which completely put any plough at defiance. Only rarely were the heavy-browed houses of the district to be seen. Their dull red roofs went well with the blackness of the stormy skies and the dark clouds which pressed the hill-tops. Throughout the last twenty miles of the journey we were in a land of caverns and streams with long underground courses. A man might, I will not say enjoy, but certainly experience a very adventurous week or two among these wilds, with a capable guide and a few hundredweight of candles. The caves of the Reka are reputed, for example, to outdo those of Adelsberg in the magnificence of their stalactites and their extent. But they have not been taken in hand, civilised, and advertised as a world's wonder like those of the latter place. A fortune would have to be spent in rendering them even tolerably approachable. And even then they would not be dangerous rivals of Adelsberg until a village had grown up in their neighbourhood, with hotels and lodging-houses for visitors.

At length the train drew up in the Adelsberg station. A furious howl of the 'bora'

greeted us the moment we set foot on the platform, and the kindly phenomenon hustled us brutally while we walked the half-mile or so into the town. Dull and gloomy though the day was, and piercingly cold at this elevation of eighteen hundred feet above sea-level in the teeth of the freezing and merciless wind, something of Adelsberg's attractions, the grotto apart, was immediately made plain. The town lies in a basin of land girdled with hills. Its buildings are of the solid, massy-roofed kind so much in vogue in southern Germany. They suggest opulence as well as warmth. There is a large hotel in the outskirts, with a hydro-pathic establishment; and there is a castle on a cliff just within the town's precincts, a few hundred feet above the nether houses which once upon a time it so effectively controlled. The castle rock gives the name to the place. It was known of old as the Arisperch or Arensperch, though the modern name seems more explicitly to indicate it as the eagle's rock. The caverns burrow in the mountain mass beneath the castle. This imposing superstructure of mighty crags and masonry seems to give added majesty to the subterranean chambers of the great grotto.

Now I did not display my Anglo-Saxon energy by going at once to the cave. That were a needless and futile feat of impetuosity. It was the dead season. The caverns were wrapt in primeval gloom. A certain amount of notice is required to get them into visiting gear—and this notice I gave formally at the snug Croat inn into which I made my way, and where I ordered dinner. I forget exactly how thick were the walls of this inn; but they impressed me at once. You would have supposed they were part of a mediæval fortress. In truth, however, they were designed merely to make the best fight possible against the insidious and yet sufficiently overt attacks of such foes as the 'bora.' There was a good deal of snow in Adelsberg, and the streets, with the quaint mercantile tokens over the doors of the shops, were as empty as the caverns themselves.

And so I ate my soup and beefsteak in the large warm room of the inn, and afterwards smoked a cigar. And while I smoked, a burly citizen from Laybach came in, swathed with furs, and said he also desired to see the grotto and would be charmed to share with me in the expense of its illumination. His German was too good or too provincial for me, even as mine was too much of an exotic for him. But we managed to join in amicable execration of the weather over our coffee and cigars, and in due time we went arm in arm under domestic guidance in the direction of the cavern. The mutual support we derived from each other was really a most serviceable aid in our struggle with the gale.

A walk, or rather stagger, of ten minutes brought us to the iron gates of the cavern. These were thrown open with all the parade so dearly loved by the representatives of a Teutonic society, and we were respectively invited to sign our names in a book. The cavern, he said, is managed by a committee who spend upon embellishing and maintaining it all the profits derived from it. The committee carries a very long corporate name, which it applies in

full to the notices and manifestoes with which it adorns the wall. All honour to it, however, for its good works. As the author of a diverting little local handbook observes: 'Whereas in other caverns you have to go carefully hand in hand, knee-deep in mud and in peril from falling water, here the paths are all levelled, made quite smooth, and even bespread with sand.' Moreover, there is a tram-line, so that ladies and others who shirk the exertion of a four-mile prowling under ground on foot may see most of the cavern's glories as much at their ease as if they were in a railway carriage.

At the outset we were not surrounded by sensational spectacles. We walked in a neat subterranean passage, gently rising, with the noise of running water gradually intensifying, as an orchestra of encouragement. But soon this corridor ended, and from a height of some sixty feet we looked down upon and across the great Cave of Neptune—the first of Adelsberg's grotto apartments. The cave is, roughly, a circle about a hundred and fifty feet in diameter, and with a vaulting some seventy feet high. The River Poik roars in its bed, and there are staircases here and there, and a stout stone bridge spanning the river. Staircases, bridge, and the various thoroughfares were all lit by scores of candles, and the sparkle of the lights shone fitfully in the turbid speeding stream. The roof of the cave is of the conventional stalactitic kind. Such, in dry detail, are the attributes of the Cave of Neptune, or, as it is more picturesquely called, the Cathedral Cave. From our lofty perch we gazed at the surprising scene, murmured some of those adjectives of delight and admiration with which the German language abounds, and then prepared to descend to the lower levels and cross the bridge. I think the finest thrill in Adelsberg is to be had on this bridge when the river is in full spate, as it was with us, and especially when the place is not searched in its every nook and corner by the electric light. The candles were a humble enough illuminant, but they left the imagination in strong possession of its powers; and it was impressive to look hither and thither in the echoing semi-darkness, and to see no forms except those of the prattling guide and the stout Laybach merchant, whose fat hands were for ever rising to give greater emphasis to his ejaculations of awe and amazement.

For those who like such things, there is a conspicuous memorial tablet in this cave telling in fulsome terms of the visit hither in 1816 of 'Francis the First, the just, the good, and the wise.' But it seems out of place. We are here in the realms of the gnomes. Human potentates are of no account in these depths, any more than in the air five or ten thousand feet above their kingdoms of earth.

Before passing to the next chamber, 'the name place,' a convenient slab of stalactite, may be noticed. Five hundred years ago Austrian tourists scratched their initials here. Posterity has vastly increased the number of these tokens of the dead.

The Emperor Ferdinand's Grotto, which adjoins the huge vestibule of the cave, is more than half a mile long. It is not broad in proportion to its length, being really in places a

mere corridor; but it is interesting throughout. Our methodical cicerone never paused in the claims he made on our attention. The walls on either hand are wrought into an infinite variety of stalagmitic freaks. The names of a few of them will be as good as a minute description—the Butcher's Shop, the Elephant's Head, the Font, the Crinoline, the Opera Box, the Bacon Rind, the Handkerchief, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Nunnery, the Wax Candle, and so forth. The Butcher's Shop, for instance, is an odd agglomeration of pendent stalactites of many shapes, in which the gross fancy of the committee (we will assume) have seen legs of mutton, ribs of beef, and the like. Our guide held his light behind many of these diverting excrescences, and it was at least instructive to see the delicacy of their organisation and the beauty of their translucent framework.

The most remarkable part of the Emperor Ferdinand's Grotto is the Ballroom, a chamber broadened in its midst. This apartment is well named, for annually on Whitsunday a great dance is given here. As many as five thousand persons have polka'd and waltzed in it in a day. There is a suitable natural nook among stalactites for the musicians, and a pure spring of fresh water to aid in refreshing the dancers. Conceive the scene when this ballroom (one hundred feet by ninety, and forty-five feet high) is filled with lusty Croats and visitors of all kinds, and the whole is lighted as the committee well know how to light the caverns on particular occasions!

In 1856 conjecture and gunpowder extended the grotto from this last chamber into the Francis Joseph and Elizabeth Cave—also traversed by the tram-line. A tunnel nearly forty feet long opened up the Belvedere, an apartment about a hundred feet high, which lends itself excellently to illumination. A somewhat repellent chamber to the left is called Tartarus (echoing with the voices of the river far down its black depths), and on the right extends the most astounding of Adelsberg's features, the Calvary Cave.

Our guide made himself a little hoarse in trying to make me understand how many thousand years it took a common Adelsberg stalactite to grow a yard. He had in the *Sword of Damocles* a capital text for his dissertation. This is a pendent stalactite which, in 3000 A.D. or thereabouts (according to his theories), will have joined a neighbour gradually rising to it from the level. Hereabouts, too, my Laybach friend had a fit of ecstasy over the Laundry, an arrangement of dainty transparencies which the Teutonic or Slavonic fancy interprets as pocket-handkerchiefs, sheets, and more recondite objects known only to washerwomen.

The Calvary Grotto has left the strongest impression on my mind. It is adjacent to the Belvedere, and is reached by a staircase zigzagged up the limestone. The height of this chamber is one hundred and seventy-two feet, and a mass of rock springs from its midst to within fifty feet of the dome. When, not without some panting, we had reached the level of this grotto, and marked our shadows writ gigantic against the walls and the vaulting, and beheld also the radiant confusion all about us, it was impossible not to agree with our guide that this

is Adelsberg's glory. We were a mile and a half or more from the entrance, and it was as if we were on the site of some wrecked acropolis, with the pillars and pediments of down-fallen temples littering the ground. The stalactites here were of different colours—yellow, crimson, white, and lemon—and dazzling with diamond-like laminae. Milan Cathedral gives its name to one mass of pinnacled rock. Here, too, is the Curtain, though there is another curtain lower down much more enchanting. The latter is perhaps the finest stalactite in the caves. It has grown from the wall like a fungus; is nine feet long by three broad, and is little more than a quarter of an inch in thickness. A candle behind it shows its amber and roseate hues and crystalline beauty to perfection.

After the Calvary, our finite powers of admiration failed to hold out. The voluble guide continued his narratives most conscientiously, but I yawned, and the Laybach citizen complained of weariness in quite an irreverent manner. However, there was no help for it. We were far in the bowels of the earth, and we had perforce to grope back the two miles we had come.

In all, we were under ground three hours. I hailed the daylight and the 'bora' with comparative relief when we renewed acquaintance with them. They told us at the inn that the cavern committee have still most ambitious designs in the matter of the grotto. They believe it may be extended indefinitely, and they mean to continue blasting their way from chamber to chamber. But really, upon the whole, these gentlemen may be advised to be contented with Adelsberg as it is. No ordinary mortal will be able to endure with comfort the strain upon body and mind involved in more than four or five hours' life under ground, every minute of which is devoted, of necessity, to the contrivance of a new compliment to Dame Nature for her ingenuity and grace. As it was, after supper at the Crown, I recalled with a certain horror the number of times I had uttered the word 'Extraordinary!' during the afternoon. One may save time and effort by pronouncing Adelsberg's caverns, once and for all, sublime.

#### SONNET.

SOMETIMES amid the garish hours of day,  
Bringing from golden hills the breath of morn,  
Through fields of waving barley and ripe corn,  
Stealing athwart the old and beaten way  
My feet have trod, sweet vagrant memories stray,  
Old loves, old dreams; not wan and travel-worn,  
But fresh with beauty as of flowers new-born.  
And in the passing moment that they stay,  
Trembles my heart with all the olden grace  
Of joy and hope; again my pulses leap,  
A flash breaks through the dusky bars of sleep—  
A glance, a whispered word, a touch, a face.  
So in the crowded street comes back to me,  
The scent of pines, the glimmer of the sea.

VIRNA WOODS.

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